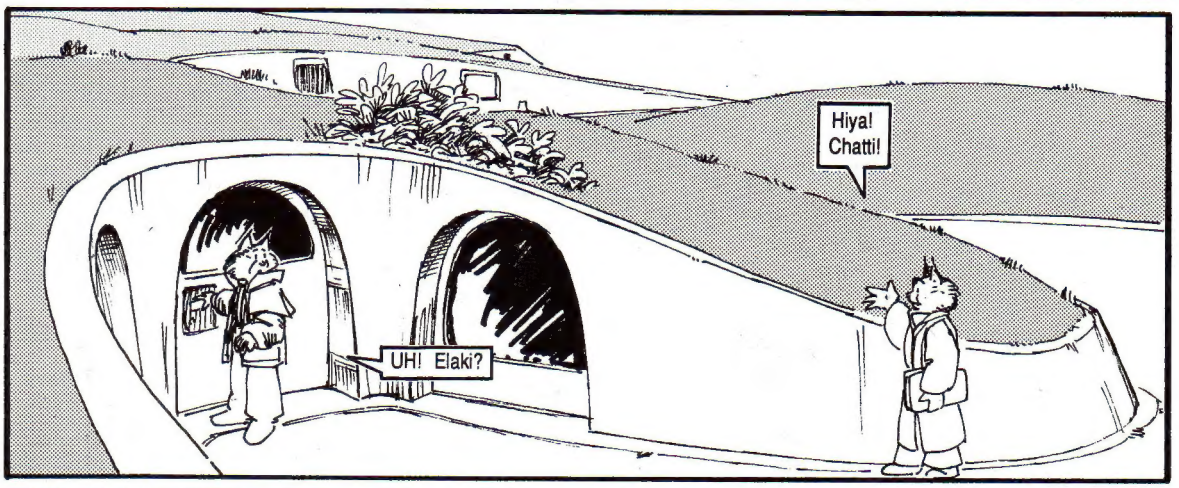
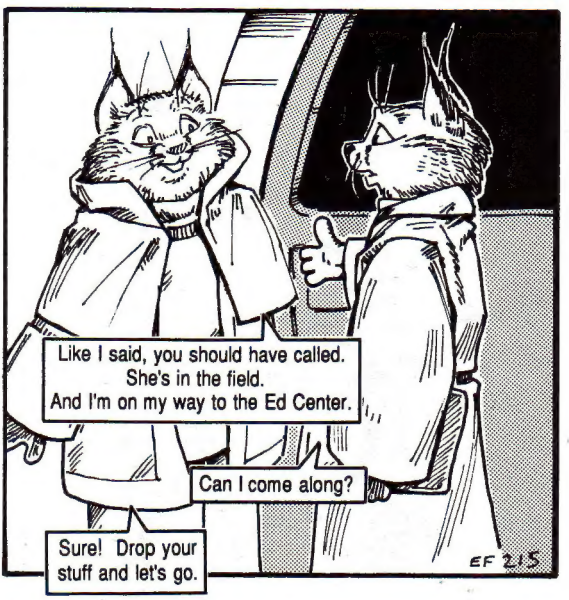
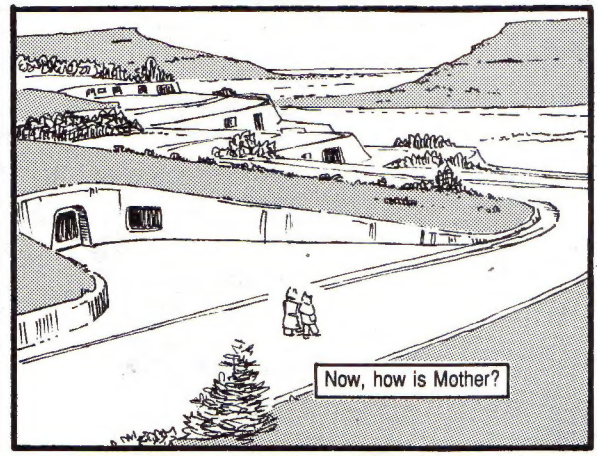
AP
Antarctic Press™
2
SEPT 1991
$2.50 U.S.
$3.25 Can.

THE NEW ALBEDO

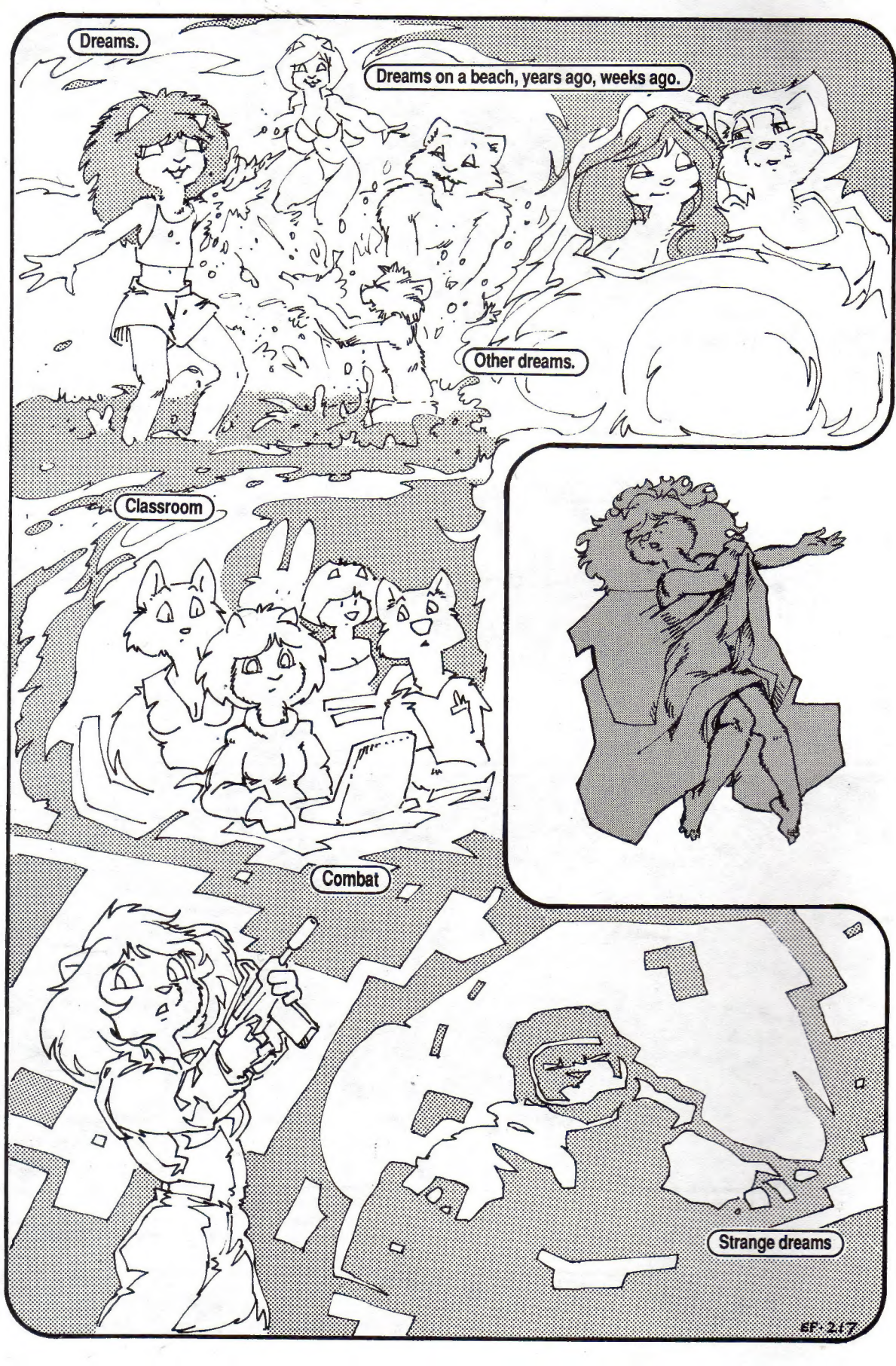
Endly is a second generation colony world, meaning it was developed by an earlier colony world rather than directly from the home system of Arraas Charka. The Enchawah industrial group started it as a private venture, settling it with its own employees and subcontractors and running it as a long-term business venture. Since Enchawah is an employee-owned corporation, with most planning and policy decided by consensus of the rank and file in cooperation with the voted-in board of directors, Endly's government is effectively a democratic republic. However, non-employees can participate in local plebiscites, or for that matter take up residence on the planet, only by meeting rather restrictive requirements. Since the company also acts as government, the economy is effectively socialist, with all basic needs provided by the state/company. However, many specialty goods and services are available through small-scale private ventures, which are actively encouraged by Enchawah. Endly has a limited membership in the ConFed, which reduces reciprocal obligations and allows it to retain more autonomy (such as restricting immigration and establishing contacts with unaligned powers).



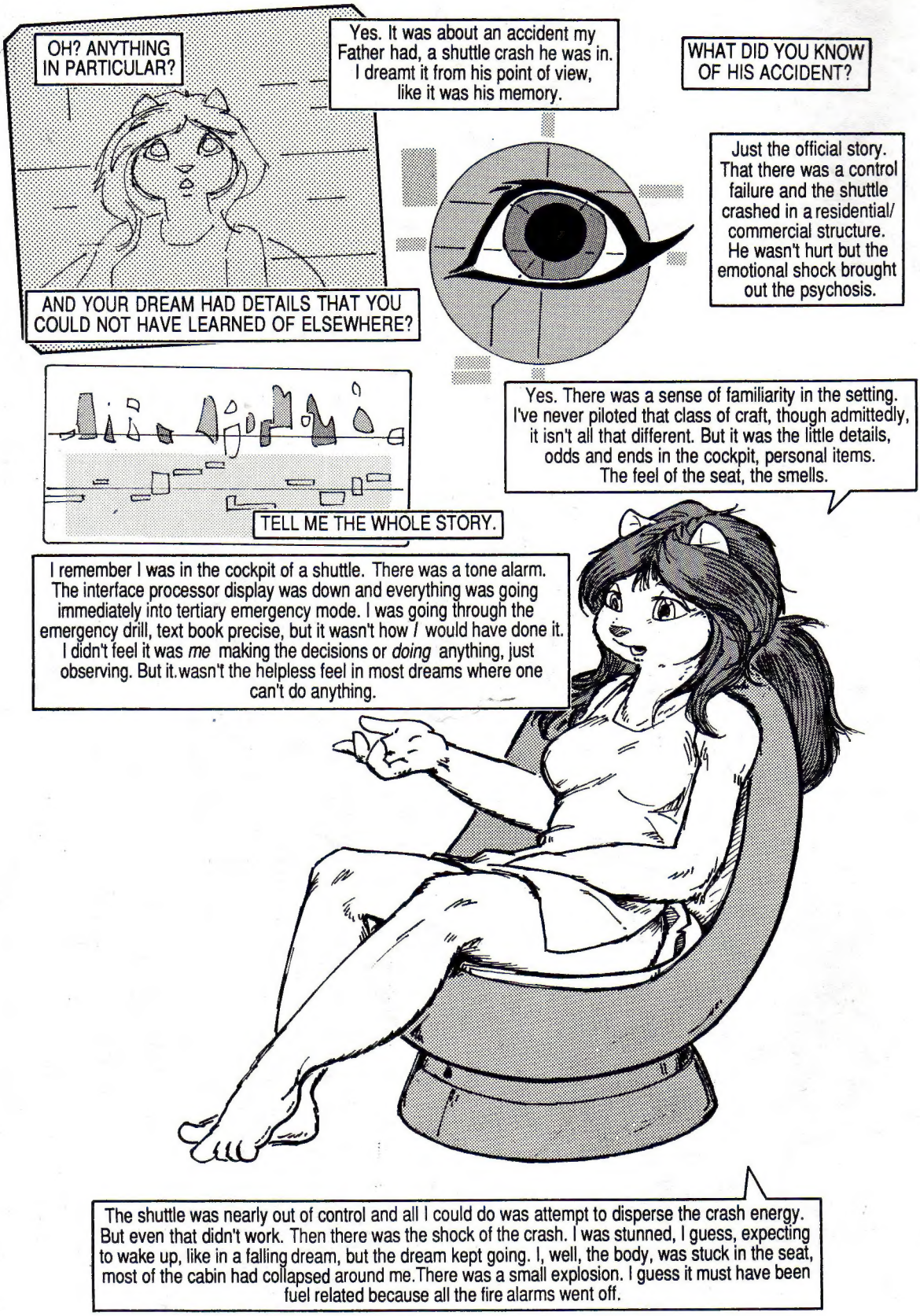




A commercial starship comes into the Ahahn-Tako system. Among its passengers is an anonymous individual that not even the ship's computer will remember beyond a name on a list. The passenger is noticed by the one thing he fears, which for the moment chooses to do nothing but watch and wait, confident that it can intervene if it needs to.


Dreams.
Dreams on a beach, years ago, weeks ago.
Other dreams.
Classroom
Combat
Strange dreams
EF·217

SD 197-07-20 EDF Remote Operations Base, Ish-Tako
Hello Computer.
HELLO, HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
I'd like a psych discussion about a weirdly vivid dream.
EF 218


OH? ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR?
Yes. It was about an accident my Father had, a shuttle crash he was in. I dreamt it from his point of view, like it was his memory.
WHAT DID YOU KNOW OF HIS ACCIDENT?
Just the official story. That there was a control failure and the shuttle crashed in a residential/ commercial structure. He wasn't hurt but the emotional shock brought out the psychosis.
AND YOUR DREAM HAD DETAILS THAT YOU COULD NOT HAVE LEARNED OF ELSEWHERE?
Yes. There was a sense of familiarity in the setting. I've never piloted that class of craft, though admittedly, it isn't all that different. But it was the little details, odds and ends in the cockpit, personal items. The feel of the seat, the smells.
TELL ME THE WHOLE STORY.
I remember I was in the cockpit of a shuttle. There was a tone alarm. The interface processor display was down and everything was going immediately into tertiary emergency mode. I was going through the emergency drill, text book precise, but it wasn't how *I* would have done it. I didn't feel it was *me* making the decisions or *doing* anything, just observing. But it.wasn't the helpless feel in most dreams where one can't do anything.
The shuttle was nearly out of control and all I could do was attempt to disperse the crash energy. But even that didn't work. Then there was the shock of the crash. I was stunned, I guess, expecting to wake up, like in a falling dream, but the dream kept going. I, well, the body, was stuck in the seat, most of the cabin had collapsed around me.There was a small explosion. I guess it must have been fuel related because all the fire alarms went off.

I struggled with the seat. It was just no good. And in the background, all along, I could hear the in-ship comm. Screams from the passengers when the emergency started, cries and moans immediately after the impact, and then with the fire alarms -.

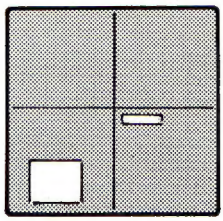
The sound people make when they're being burned to death.

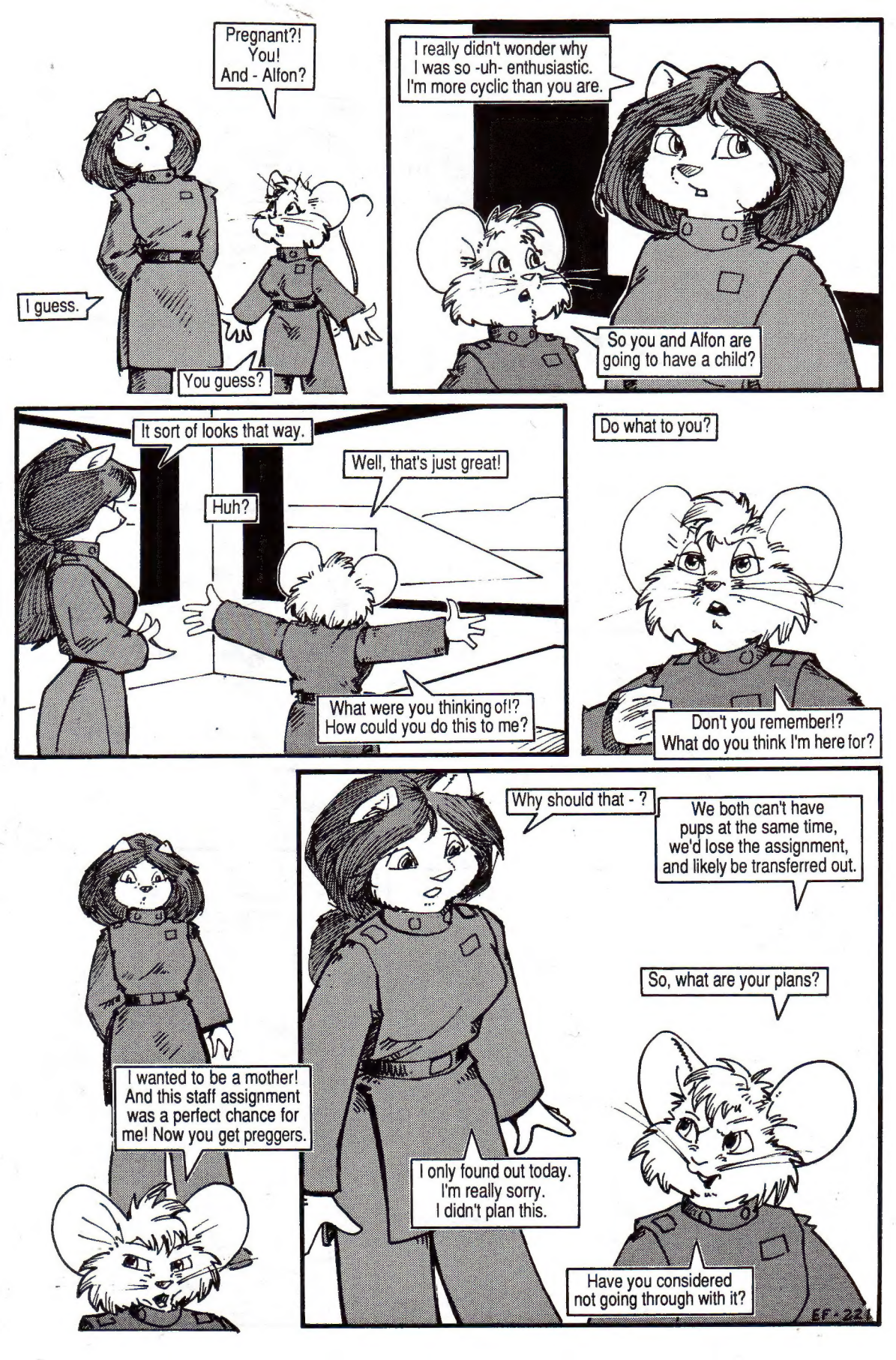
INTERESTING. I WILL HAVE TO COMPARE YOUR DREAM WITH THE AVAILABLE RECORDS. I WILL THEN HAVE MORE DETAILED QUESTIONS TO ASK YOU ABOUT THIS.

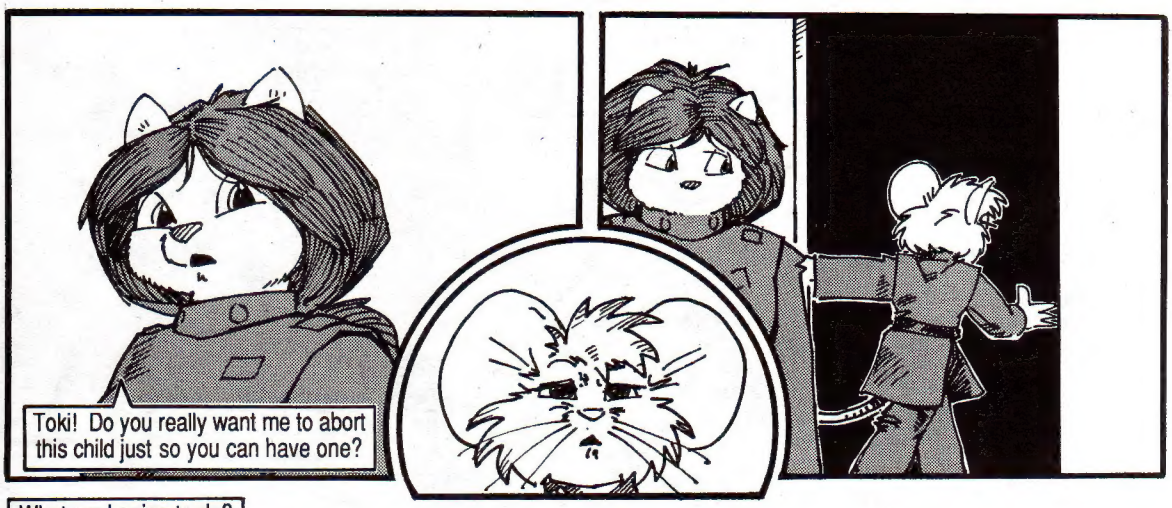
I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO GIVE YOU A GENERAL EXAMINATION. CAN YOU GO TO THE MEDICAL UNIT?

Yes. I suppose it will include a full psych-hygiene?

PERHAPS, BUT THAT SEEMS UNLIKELY.




Pregnant?! You! And - Alfon?
I guess.
You guess?
I really didn't wonder why I was so -uh- enthusiastic. I'm more cyclic than you are.
So you and Alfon are going to have a child?
It sort of looks that way.
Huh?
Well, that's just great!
What were you thinking of!? How could you do this to me?
Do what to you?
Don't you remember!? What do you think I'm here for?
I wanted to be a mother! And this staff assignment was a perfect chance for me! Now you get preggers.
Why should that - ?
We both can't have pups at the same time, we'd lose the assignment, and likely be transferred out.
I only found out today. I'm really sorry. I didn't plan this.
So, what are your plans?
Have you considered not going through with it?
EF-221

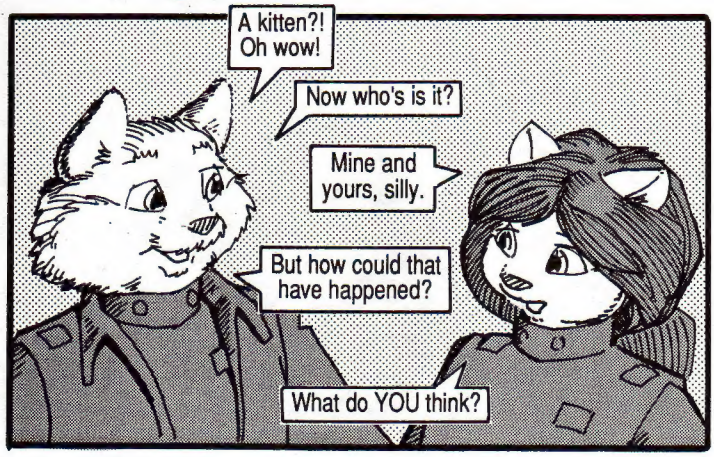


What am I going to do?

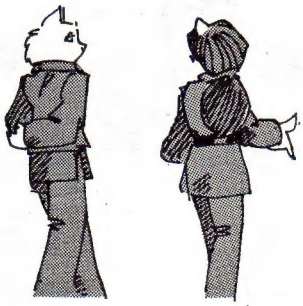
THIS IS PURELY YOUR OWN AFFAIR, THOUGH IT WOULD NOT BE A DETRIMENT FOR YOU TO BECOME A MOTHER. SOME CHARACTER BUILDING .

What about Toki, and Alfon, and for that matter, my career?

WHY SHOULD THIS AFFECT YOUR CAREER? THERE WILL BE SOME OPPOSITION, BUT NO MORE THAN YOU ALREADY HAVE. AND OTHERS WILL CONSIDER IT A MODERATING INFLUENCE, A MATURING THAT YOU NEED TO BECOME A SENIOR COMMANDER. AS FOR TOKI, IT IS STILL TOO SOON TO TELL. I WILL MONITOR HER. AND ALFON, WHY DON'T YOU JUST ASK HIM?



I only found out today. And I really don't know what to do. What do you think?



Uuuh. Well, if you want to get really serious about it - . I don't know you well enough to guarantee that I could stand living with you for ever, being Dornthantii and all. But I do like the idea of having a kitten to raise, and if you'll let me, I want to be there for it.

Yeah, I think, despite all your many and obvious character flaws, that you might make a fair father. You're certainly no officer.

What a thing to say about the father of your child!

Yeah, well, if I'm going to remain active, I'm going to have to arrange for some manner of care group.

Care group? I guess, but I could stay in and care for the kitten. All my work can be done on a comm station.
Oh, right. And she'd learn to keyboard before she walks.
She? You've already had a scan?
No. Of course not. I want to keep it a surprise.
Anyway, what do you think?
I really do need more time to think about it.
I'm not going to make any sweeping decisions on the first day. This is all too important, too long-term for that.
Toki has already made it clear she's not going to support me. So I've got to figure out how to do it myself. I've got work to do right now. I'll call later.
EF-223

SD 197-07-28
EDF Regional Command Center, Dornthant

Hello?
Is anyone home?

Hoi! Commander , you're early.

The official greetings and such won't be until tomorrow and we were afraid we wouldn't have a chance to get to know you until all the hubbub was over.

It's a pleasure to be serving with you all and I'm sure we'll be a great team.

What a bunch of suck-ups. I'll have this Wing in my pocket before they know how to spell my name.

Well, Ermling, you got yours, off in the boonies, and I've got mine now.

Being a stiff bitch Dornthantti, you deserve every bit of it.

How you'll spit when I become the Force Commander of your home system.

EF 229

SD 197-07-30 ILR Command Headquarters, Baliannian

Hey! Colonel! We've got something for you.

You?

Hassakenall, in development.

We've been working on new gadgets for the effort and have come up with a good one.

This is our is our work area.

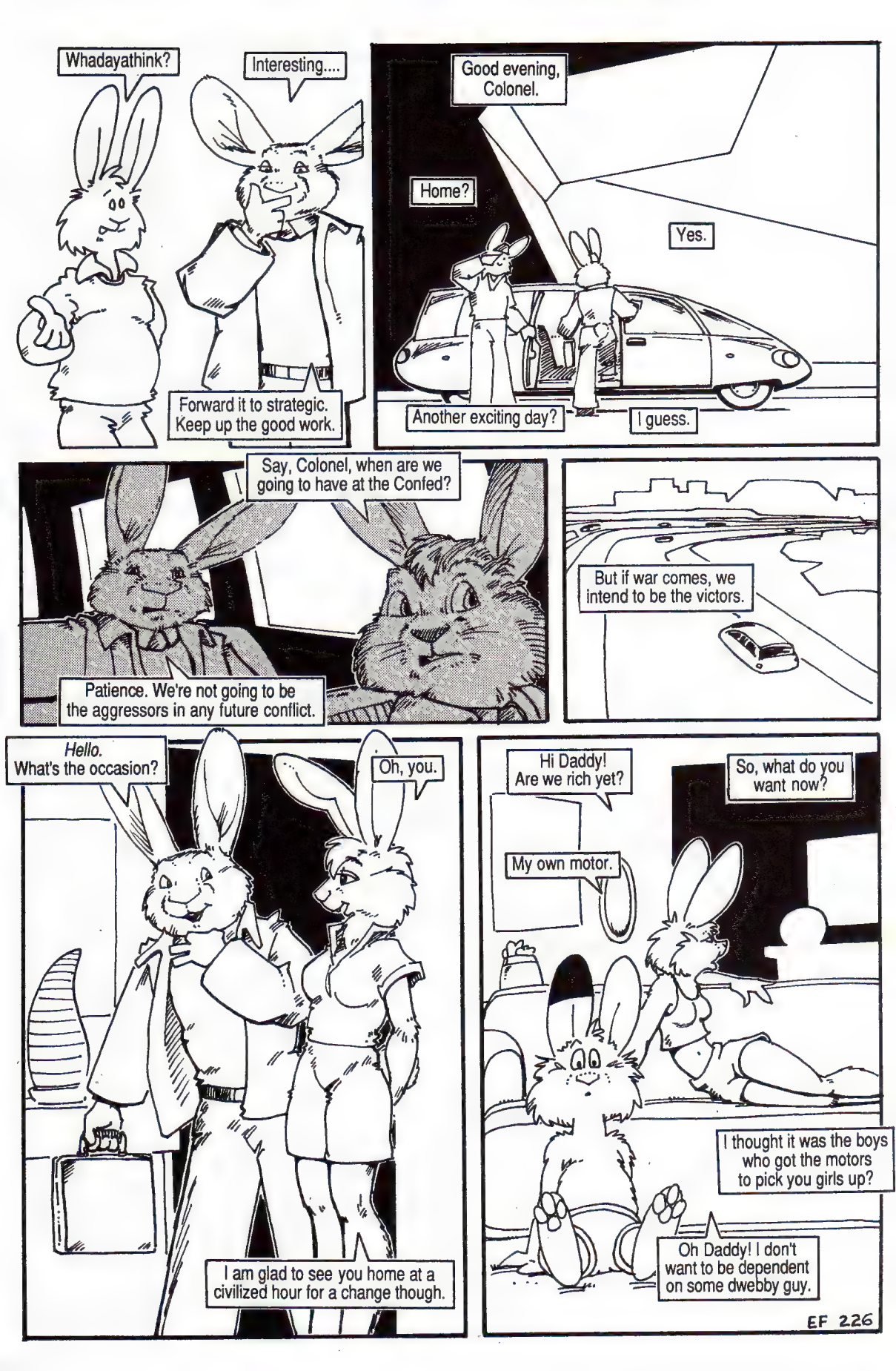
Bill here actually suggested it.

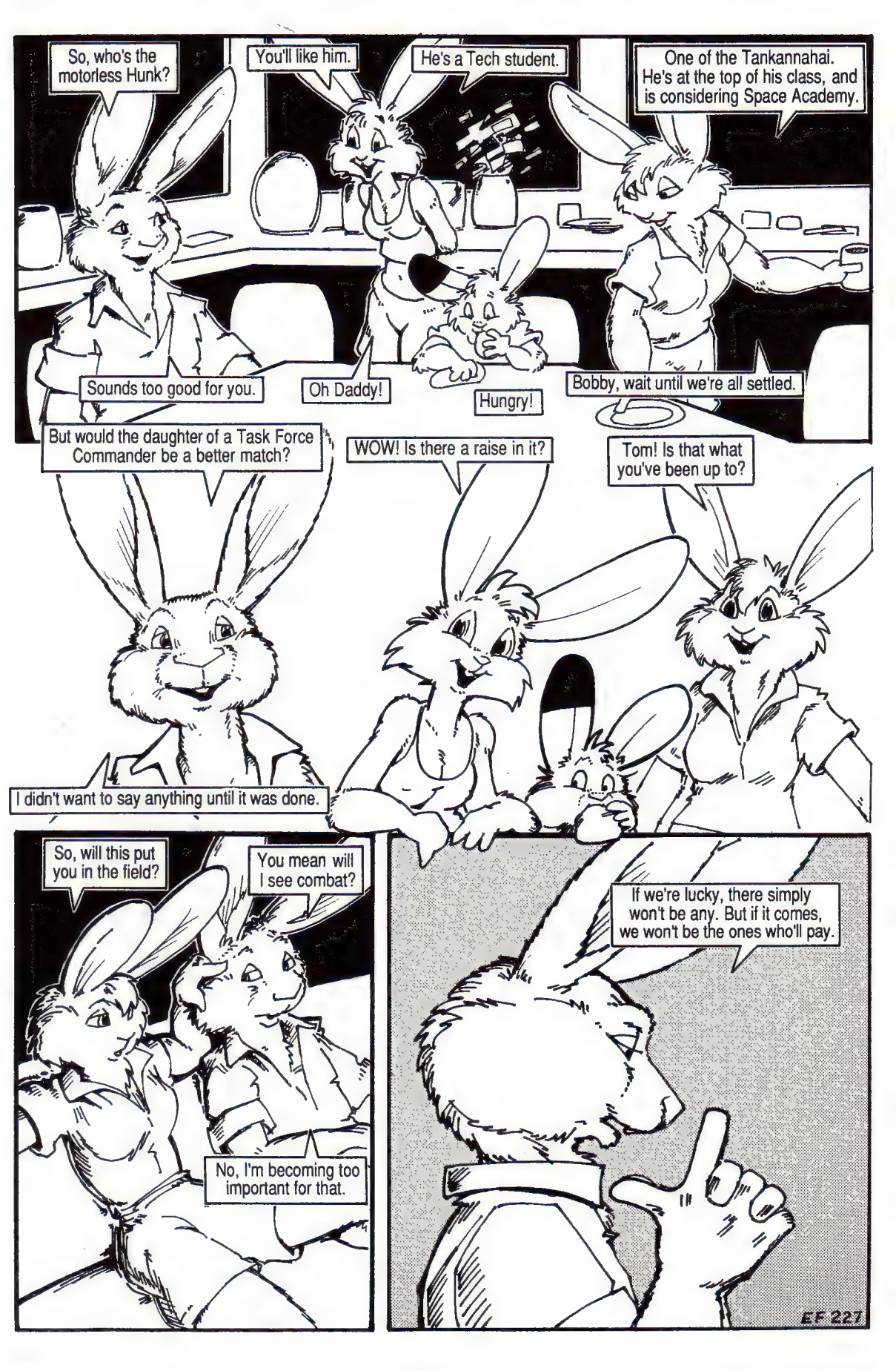
We've been studying area effect weapons, mostly non-nuclear. Big kinetic impactors have enough energy, but they're only good for making big craters. Since that's not always desirable, we kicked around ways to use the energy in different ways.

See, a couple of kiloton kinetic accelerator unit, but instead of a single impact mass, it's made up of, say, 10 Kilo slugs. Just before atmosphere entry, they're dispersed, and you have 100,000 high velocity objects ripping through the air at several hundred Kilometers per second. The collective shock wave would easily match a large nuclear airburst, but without the undesirable side effects.

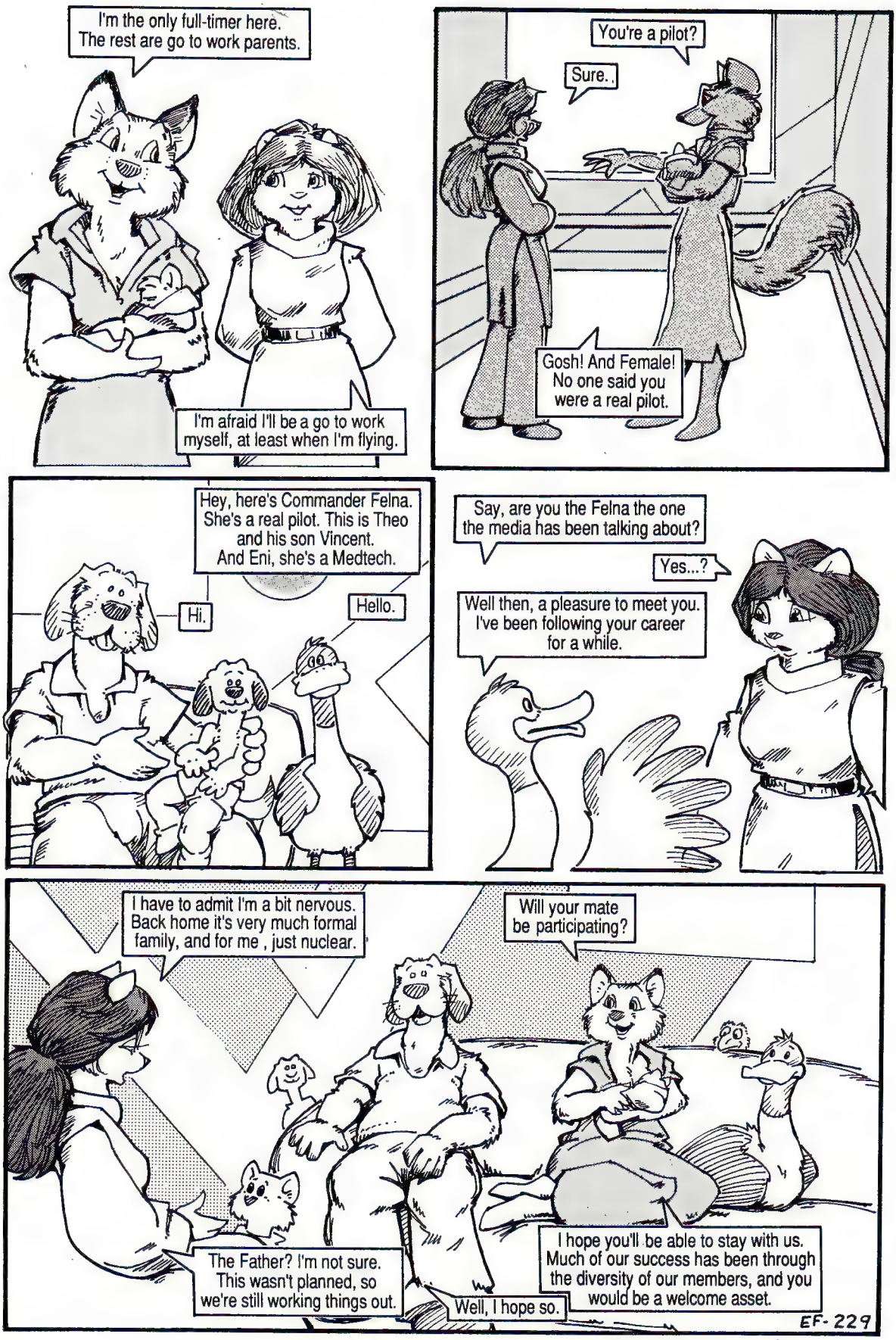
What we ended up with is a way to transfer a lot of the energy directly to the atmosphere. With it, we can create an airshock with several times the coverage of a surface impact. It also makes for less cratering and related ejecta, and less gross environmental impact.

Pretty cool, huh?

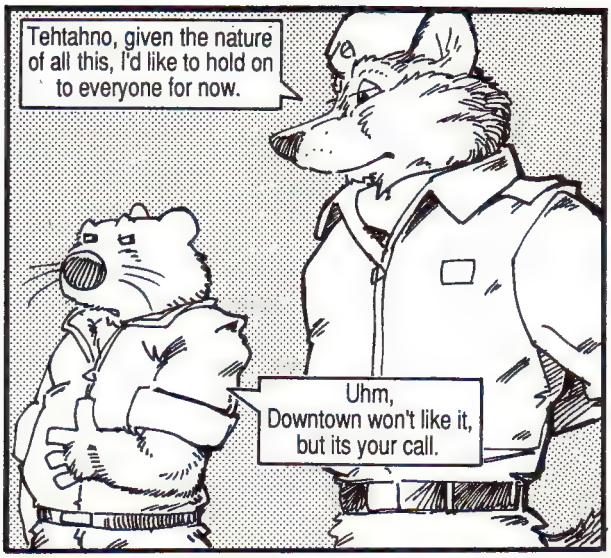

Whadayathink?
Interesting....
Forward it to strategic. Keep up the good work.
Good evening, Colonel.
Home?
Yes.
Another exciting day?
I guess.
Say, Colonel, when are we going to have at the Confed?
Patience. We're not going to be the aggressors in any future conflict.
But if war comes, we intend to be the victors.
Hello. What's the occasion?
Oh, you.
I am glad to see you home at a civilized hour for a change though.
Hi Daddy! Are we rich yet?
My own motor.
So, what do you want now?
I thought it was the boys who got the motors to pick you girls up?
Oh Daddy! I don't want to be dependent on some dwebby guy.
EF 226


So, who's the motorless Hunk?
You'll like him.
He's a Tech student.
One of the Tankannahai. He's at the top of his class, and is considering Space Academy.
Sounds too good for you.
Oh Daddy!
Hungry!
Bobby, wait until we're all settled.
But would the daughter of a Task Force Commander be a better match?
WOW! Is there a raise in it?
Tom! Is that what you've been up to?
I didn't want to say anything until it was done.
So, will this put you in the field?
You mean will I see combat?
No, I'm becoming too important for that.
If we're lucky, there simply won't be any. But if it comes, we won't be the ones who'll pay.
EF 227

SD 197-07-25 Tadak City, Ish Tako
Hello?
Hi! You must be Commander Felna.
Come on in. I'm Keena, one of the mothers here.
I've heard you're Dornthantii, and though my mate's family comes from there, I've never met anyone who claims it as home. Are they all as rigid as is said?
ah... Well, we're not so bad. A lot of it is just a rather strong emphasis on the responsibility of the citizen to the society, that sort of thing.
Like picking up every piece of garbage in public places? My Erik has a fit when ever he sees public litter.
I'm afraid so.
Our outlook has been very 'small planet' oriented. So we're awfully concerned about how even little things can impact the biosphere. And since a lot of us are Spacers, we tend to be very meticulous about attention to details and adherence to regulations.
So's that's why you all never relax. Oh, I'm just kidding. You should have heard what they thought about me, being Enchawah Family. Come on and meet the rest.


I'm the only full-timer here. The rest are go to work parents.
I'm afraid I'll be a go to work myself, at least when I'm flying.
You're a pilot?
Sure..
Gosh! And Female! No one said you were a real pilot.
Hey, here's Commander Felna. She's a real pilot. This is Theo and his son Vincent. And Eni, she's a Medtech.
Hi.
Hello.
Say, are you the Felna the one the media has been talking about?
Yes...?
Well then, a pleasure to meet you. I've been following your career for a while.
I have to admit I'm a bit nervous. Back home it's very much formal family, and for me , just nuclear.
Will your mate be participating?
The Father? I'm not sure. This wasn't planned, so we're still working things out.
Well, I hope so.
I hope you'll be able to stay with us. Much of our success has been through the diversity of our members, and you would be a welcome asset.
EF-229

SD 197-06-10 Hicho, Ekosiak
Careful all! There could be booby traps among them.
They're sweeping clean so far.
Say, Colonel, we'd like to hold Banchen separately.
Oh?
Special Services wants to talk to them.
Uhm. I'll take care of it.
So, you want to go to Special Services?
Special? They asked for me?
Well, Tehtahno said they'd be interested.
Tehtahno?! That means... uh, Colonel, sir...
You know Dana doesn't want dead escapees. It's those bastards down at Special. So cut me loose, or at least hold me with the others until Dana can spring me.
Sergeant! I want all these suspects "A" secured.
"A" it is, sir.
EF 239


Tehtahno, given the nature of all this, I'd like to hold on to everyone for now.
Uhm, Downtown won't like it, but its your call.

Save preceding to secure file, secure analysis one. All related action to go through "A" security.

Guess who came up in conversation today?
While you were being heroic?
Ahuh. Dana.

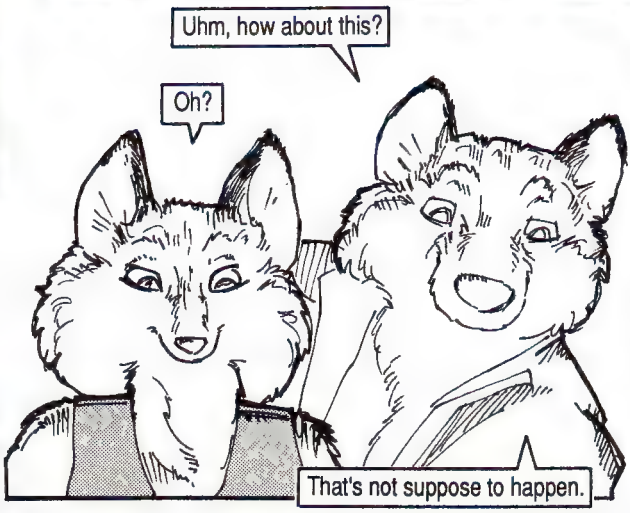
DANA!?
He and Special Services have some disagreement about the disposition of terrorist suspects.

Dana and Special Services?
Well, according to one of the suspects, Dana is a benevolent influence for the movement.

While Tehtahno and Special Services seem more interested in correcting mistakes.
Like being captured alive is one they have some practice in fixing.

Let me see if I can find something. There were some interesting connections with Aito.

There's some interesting blanks in the data bases on these guys.
Those ought to be clear, let me.


Uhm, how about this?
Oh?
That's not suppose to happen.

What?
Special code.
I should be able to see everything now.

Now that's even more interesting. Shato or someone was awfully busy. There's no legal way for all this to be gone. I wonder if we can ask him about this?
EF 232

SD 197-09-29
Confed Special Facility, Center City, Arras Charka

SHATO.

SHATO.

I HAVE TO TALK TO YOU.

eh?

How?

THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT. THE EKOSIAKI FILES ARE BEING OPENED.

CFSS* WILL BE COMING TO INTERROGATE YOU ABOUT THEM.

Oh?

YES.

THE RENEWED INVESTIGATION WILL NOT BE AS DISCREET AS BEFORE, AND YOU MAY BECOME MORE DIRECTLY LIABLE FOR THE ASSASSINATION OF AITO.

I knew the job was dangerous when I took it.

THE CREW OF THE DH 270 IS BEING BROUGHT IN FOR AN INVESTIGATION OF THEIR HANDLING AFTER THE CHISHATA INCIDENT.

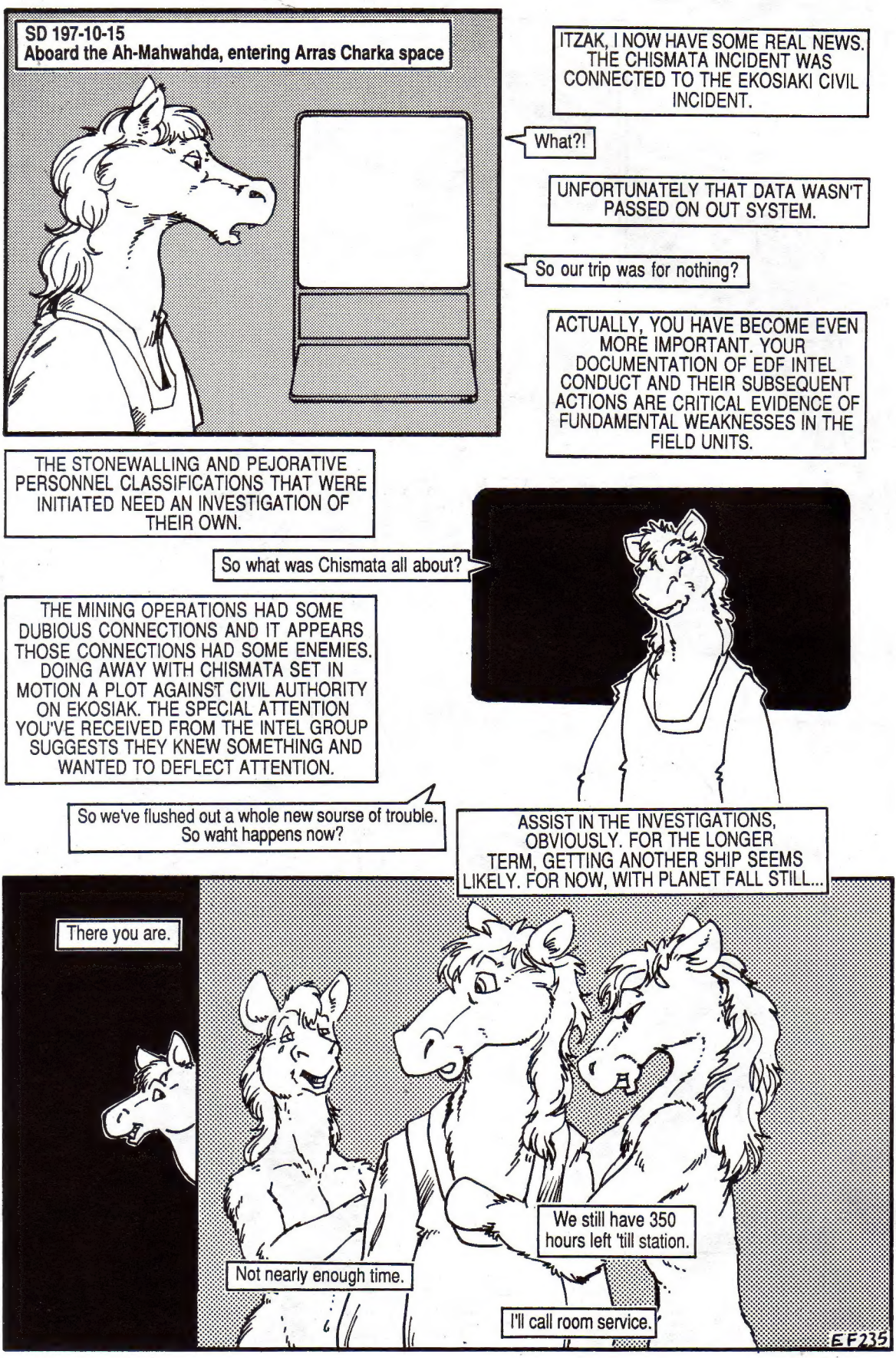
THIS COULD BRING OUT MORE CONNECTIONS WITH THE AITO CONSPIRACY.

THERE ARE SIGNS OF AN ORGANIZATION BROADER THAN EKOSIAK AND CHISHATA. THAT COULD INCLUDE EDF AND CONFED PERSONNEL. AND THAT IMPLIES THAT THERE IS SOMETHING TERRIBLY WRONG AMONG THE OUTER COMMANDS.

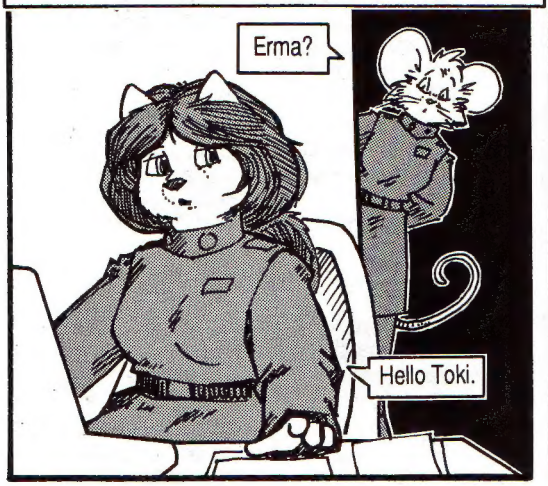
YOUR SPECIAL TALENTS MAY YET BE NEEDED.

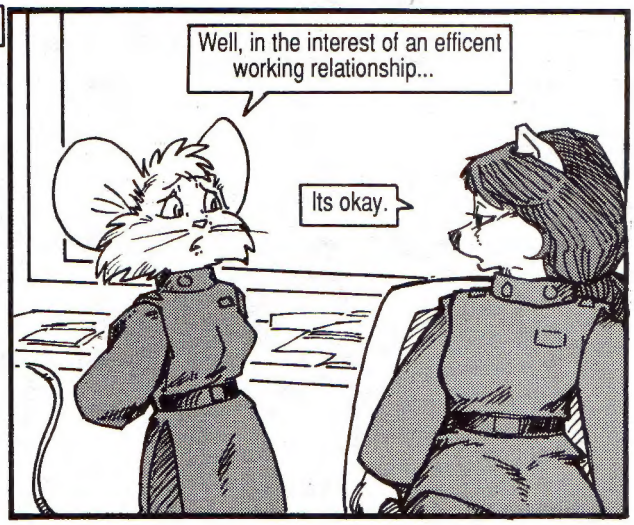
*CFSS = Confed Special Services

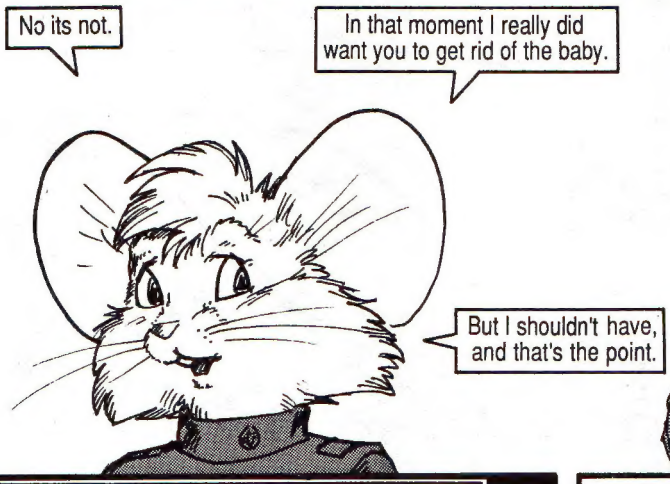
Oh, another dream.
That must be Father in his academy days. I know this, it's when he met Mother.
And Joseph.
Joseph went to do introductions and set up Father for a simple joke, taking advantage of his complete lack of a sense of humor.
They told me about this.
I wonder how Itzack is doing?.
EF-234

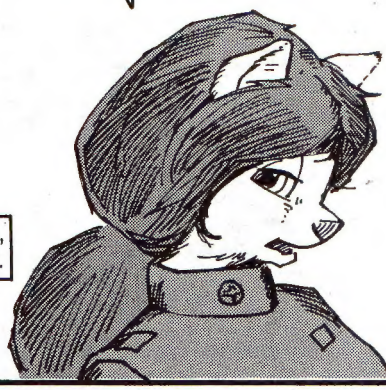

SD 197-10-15
Aboard the Ah-Mahwahda, entering Arras Charka space
ITZAK, I NOW HAVE SOME REAL NEWS. THE CHISMATA INCIDENT WAS CONNECTED TO THE EKOSIAKI CIVIL INCIDENT.
What?!
UNFORTUNATELY THAT DATA WASN'T PASSED ON OUT SYSTEM.
So our trip was for nothing?
ACTUALLY, YOU HAVE BECOME EVEN MORE IMPORTANT. YOUR DOCUMENTATION OF EDF INTEL CONDUCT AND THEIR SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS ARE CRITICAL EVIDENCE OF FUNDAMENTAL WEAKNESSES IN THE FIELD UNITS.
THE STONEWALLING AND PEJORATIVE PERSONNEL CLASSIFICATIONS THAT WERE INITIATED NEED AN INVESTIGATION OF THEIR OWN.
So what was Chismata all about?
THE MINING OPERATIONS HAD SOME DUBIOUS CONNECTIONS AND IT APPEARS THOSE CONNECTIONS HAD SOME ENEMIES. DOING AWAY WITH CHISMATA SET IN MOTION A PLOT AGAINST CIVIL AUTHORITY ON EKOSIAK. THE SPECIAL ATTENTION YOU'VE RECEIVED FROM THE INTEL GROUP SUGGESTS THEY KNEW SOMETHING AND WANTED TO DEFLECT ATTENTION.
So we've flushed out a whole new sourse of trouble. So waht happens now?
ASSIST IN THE INVESTIGATIONS, OBVIOUSLY. FOR THE LONGER TERM, GETTING ANOTHER SHIP SEEMS LIKELY. FOR NOW, WITH PLANET FALL STILL...
There you are.
We still have 350 hours left 'till station.
Not nearly enough time.
I'll call room service.
EF235

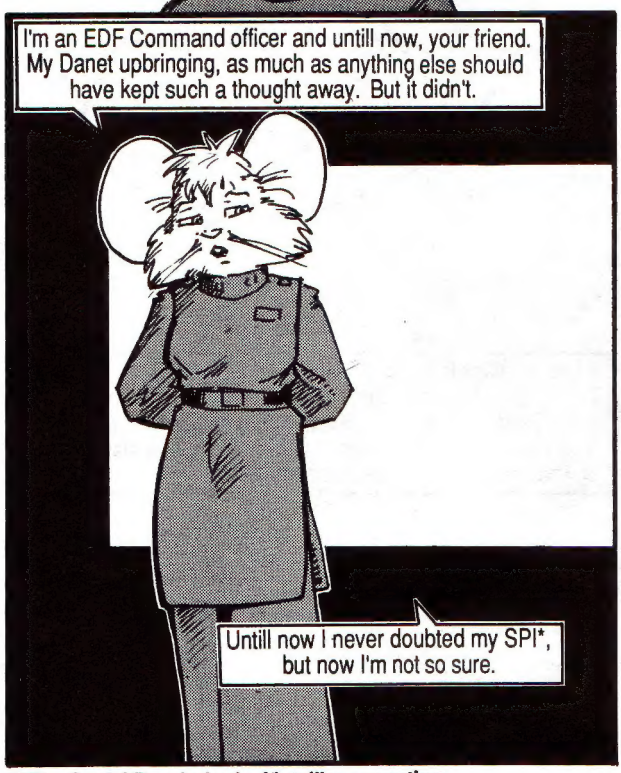
SD 197-07-28 EDF Remote Operations Base, Ish-Tako











*SPI = Social/Psychological/Intelligence rating